

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 20 and 27 to 29, claims 21 to 26 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter included in claim 24. In this regard, the Examiner will note that claim 24 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of its base claim and any intervening claims. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claim 24 is in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 21, 23, 25 and 26 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 24, and claim 22 now ultimately depends from claim 24. As such, it is believed and respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejection of Claims 20 to 23 and 25 to 29 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

As regards the rejection of claims 20 to 23 and 25 to 29, while Applicants do not necessarily agree with the merits of this rejection, claims 20 and 27 to 29 have been canceled herein without prejudice, claims 21, 23, 25 and 26 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 24, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, and claim 22 now ultimately depends from claim 24. As such, it is respectfully submitted that the present rejection is moot, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

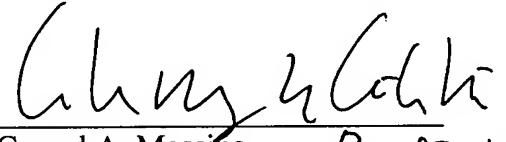
IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for immediate allowance. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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